next to the sarcophagus, is a wooden stand on which are to be found bowls of flowers and a framed photograph of the deceased. Visitors to the house are expected to call at the mausoleum, and to recite the Fatiha, the opening chapter of the Quran, for the benefit of the dead. A tomb arranged in this way, while it is not usual in Kurdistan, is characteristically Islamic, and similar structures for the burial of great persons may be encountered almost everywhere in the Middle East. 766 [788] [769]

In closing this section, it might be remembered that it was chosen to confine the discussion to the Kurdish townspeople. The family life of the Kurdish aristocracy is identical with that of the commoners of the town, save in the broader inclusion of relatives in the family and in the size and splendor of its celebrations. That of the government elite, the officials and officers of Arab or Turkish descent, has a background elsewhere in Iraq. The language and customs in an official's family are usually Arabic. This last, however, must be taken with qualification because the government elite are largely recruited from the upper class of society, and, as educated "moderns," may ignore, or, indeed, be ignorant of the folk customs of their village or town of origin. Similarly, the family of a married official, if he has brought his wife to Rowanduz, is limited in the sense that it is separated from the large body of kindred to which it belongs in another area, and a number of events in the official's life, such as inheritance 565 593

G. Hansen E-5 (1957) 1961 MA11 Kurd MA11

the door to the haggis he greeted her by reaching out the hand in question, which she kissed, laid it against her brow and passed it along both her cheeks. The name of the hand was not given me but it should be a reproduction of a "holy hand" in Baghdad.

Soothsaying. In addition to the production of amulets, traded for flour and sugar, the two sayyids had yet another thing for sale: their skill in soothsaying. Actually, this was the reason why they were allowed to carry among the women of Sheikh Talib's house in Tegawra. When the two parties had come to terms, a greasy book, kept in a plastic case of the sacred green colour hanging from the waistband of the one, was taken out and opened. One of the women placed her hand on it and pointed to one of the pages. The younger of the two sayyids then gave his interpretation in a droning voice.

Fortune-telling of this kind with the Kurds is referred to by Hitchen[1], who says: "Les Kurdes aiment beaucoup dire la bonne aventure ("bext"), et pour cela ils se servent d'un livre spécial en persane .... on l'ouvre à l'aveuglette, on regarde la sentence qui s'y trouve la première et on consulte l'indication que porte en haut chaque page ("bext" ou "rast") ....". A "prophecy" book of this type has been brought back from Afghanistan (E. 1275). In addition to this soothsaying with the help of a book, opened at hazard, I also observed another form of fortune-telling. During my stay with the Sheikh at Sargala, the house was visited by another wandering sayyid. Sitting on the floor, surrounded by women, he read their future by palmistry.

Visit to saints' graves. Kurdish women could visit saints' graves[2]. We visited a saint's grave outside Halabja. The saint's last resting place was in a small chapel where a grating cut off the grave itself and the elegant superstructure from visitors. A basin with a spring, lying behind a wall outside the enclosure surrounding the chapel, allowed women to perform the ritual ablution necessary. One of the women that day was hindered on account of her menses (cf. p. 153) from entering the chapel and small plantation, which possessed a nag tree. Close to the saint's grave the women picked up small stones from the ground and attempted to make them stick to the wall at the side of the grating. It was said that if the stone remained sticking the wish one had would be granted, otherwise not.

Saints' graves were found in a part of a mosque in the mountain town of Tawella near to the Iranian frontier. The mosque there, described as a *tekyeh*[3], was apparently a Sufi religious house[4]. The superstructures over the saints' graves inside were like houses and were hung with silken rugs[5]. On the one was the turban of the deceased. A young girl kissed the turban[6] respectfully, and scraped some soil scraped together and handed her[7] by the mullá who accompanied us. Over that part of the building, the architecture of which evinced considerable Persian influence in the decorative scales, the saints' graves were housed under vaulted domes, each of which was surmounted by a hand with outstretched fingers.